

power in the Legislature." The district from which I have the honor to come, is left behind "*longo intervallo*." To the Western district it gives twenty-seven delegates; to the Southern district but sixteen, and to the Eastern district twenty.

This calculation seems to be rather against the proposition advocated as a compromise by the gentleman from Allegany, and gives a good reason for its rejection. If the fact, that it gave to these three divisions nearly the same power in the legislature, would be good cause for its adoption, certainly the fact, that it does not, is good cause for its rejection. Various other statistical views of population, wealth and so forth, have been presented by the gentleman from Allegany, in support of this proposition.

There is, however, one statistical view and one interest which he seems to have overlooked. It is an interest of the greatest moment to the southern counties, and is perhaps the only one in the State, which is not in common to every part of it—I mean the slave interest. Representing with my distinguished colleagues, the largest slave holding county in the State, in proportion to her territory and white population, I here claim that this interest should be amply and fully protected. This protection I do not discover in the proposition of the gentleman from Washington. To that portion of the State where there are 72,727 slaves, it gives but thirty-three delegates, while to the other, where there are but 17,628, it gives forty.

The ratio is such that in the large slave-holding portion of the State there will be no increase of representation. All the increase will be in that, where the slave population is gradually diminishing, if not disappearing. It is said, that this interest has already been fully guarded by the Convention in an article which they have unanimously adopted. If there was any guarantee for the future, that it would stand as a part of the fundamental law of this State, we would have no fear. This guarantee cannot be given. In these times Constitutions are easily changed. They are altered, abolished and amended with the utmost facility. Another Convention may be called, in the course of a few short years, to reform the Constitution which we are now making. That Convention, like this, will be convened upon the basis of representation as then existing in the Legislature. Your Constitution, containing this very guarantee, will be at their mercy, and it may not be worth the parchment upon which it is written. The protection is too vague—too uncertain.

Adopt the proposition of the gentleman from Washington, and you are bringing a danger upon this interest, which in time to come may utterly destroy it. I entertain no fear of any part of the State of Maryland now upon this subject. Her soundness cannot be questioned. It is not so much for the present as for the future, that we ask protection. In the progress of time things may change, and it is against this change that we desire to guard. The views of the counties bordering upon non-slaveholding States, and of Bal-

timore, with her immense population and power, may undergo an entire revolution. The situation of Maryland, as a kind of border State in reference to this interest of slavery, is a peculiar one. It is upon her that the fanaticism of the north is directed in all its fury. It will leave no means, fair or foul, untried, to crush within her borders the institution, against which it is waging a war that has already shaken the pillars of the Union. We are not willing to abandon any check, which will enable us in time to come, to protect ourselves and our property against it.

As I have said, it is the only interest which is not in common to the whole State. There is no interest, however, in the border counties which is not common also to the southern counties. They are cultivators of the soil—their pursuits are the same, and they have no institutions or system of laws which we have not. To Baltimore city we cannot be hostile. Every part of Maryland must regard her prosperity with pride. Her enterprise and commerce have carried the name of this good old State into almost every port, where trade and commerce are known. Almost every county has contributed to her population some favorite son. She is our market for the produce of our soil, and sends us in return many of the necessaries and luxuries of life. Her prosperity is interwoven with ours, and every consideration prompts the desire for her advancement. These portions of the State have no interest which we could injure without at the same time inflicting an injury upon ourselves. Our condition is a different one. That interest, which we regard with so much jealousy and which forms so large a portion of our wealth, might be stricken down and destroyed, and the wealth of other parts of the State scarcely feel the shock. Give to us such a representation as will be able to protect it, not only in the Legislature of the State, but in any Convention that may be hereafter called to remodel your Constitution. It is an interest which must have the *power to protect itself*. This power the large slave holding counties now claim at your hands. It is a power inestimable to them, and which cannot injure the other portions of the State. Justice demands, that in compromising this question, their rights, I mean the rights of the slave holding counties, should not be disregarded, and this interest left hereafter to ask for protection as a boon of mercy. We but claim the power to secure the enjoyment of our property in peace and safety. I cannot and will not support any system of representation in which this protection is not given. Were I to do so, I should feel that I was not only recreant to my own sense of right, but had betrayed the confidence which a generous constituency reposed in me, when they sent me here as one of their delegates.

Another objection, to the proposition of the gentleman from Washington, is that it is based upon federal numbers. The gentleman from Baltimore, (Mr. Gwinn,) who advocated federal numbers as a just basis, has claimed that it is recognised in the Constitution of 1836, and calls upon us to stand by it as one of the compromises then agreed upon. This is indeed a strange